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16 August 1979

# China Report

POLITICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

No. 11

PRC Guided Missiles



FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

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# CHINA REPORT

## POLITICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

No. 11

### PRC GUIDED MISSILES

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PICTURES FROM 'JIEFANGJUN WENYI'

## 迎接科技的春天 (速写)

[Text]

"Greetings to a Spring of Science and  
Technology (Sketches)" by Guan Weixing  
[7070 4850 5281]

关维兴

"Strive for fulfilling  
the general task of the  
new period"

"Fire extinguisher (?) IV"



"Working Against Time"  
July 1978



Beijing JIEFANGJUN WENYI [PLA LITERATURE] in Chinese No 2, 1 Feb 79  
inside front cover

▲ 风 雨 无 阻

"Rain or Shine Makes No Difference"



▲ 新 的 长 征

"A New Long March"

"Scaling Height"

◀ 攀 登

"Working Meticulously"

▼ 一 丝 不 苟



Beijing JIEFANGJUN WENYI [PLA LITERATURE] in Chinese No 2, 1 Feb 79  
inside front cover



"Forward March" [Oil Painting] by Yu Yongzheng [0060 3057 2973]  
Fei Jinhai [6316 6855 3189]  
Guan Weixing [7070 4850 5281]

Beijing JIEFANGJUN WENYI [PLA LITERATURE] in Chinese No 1, 1 Jan 78  
inside back cover

跟  
踪  
正  
常

"Normal Tracking  
Operation"

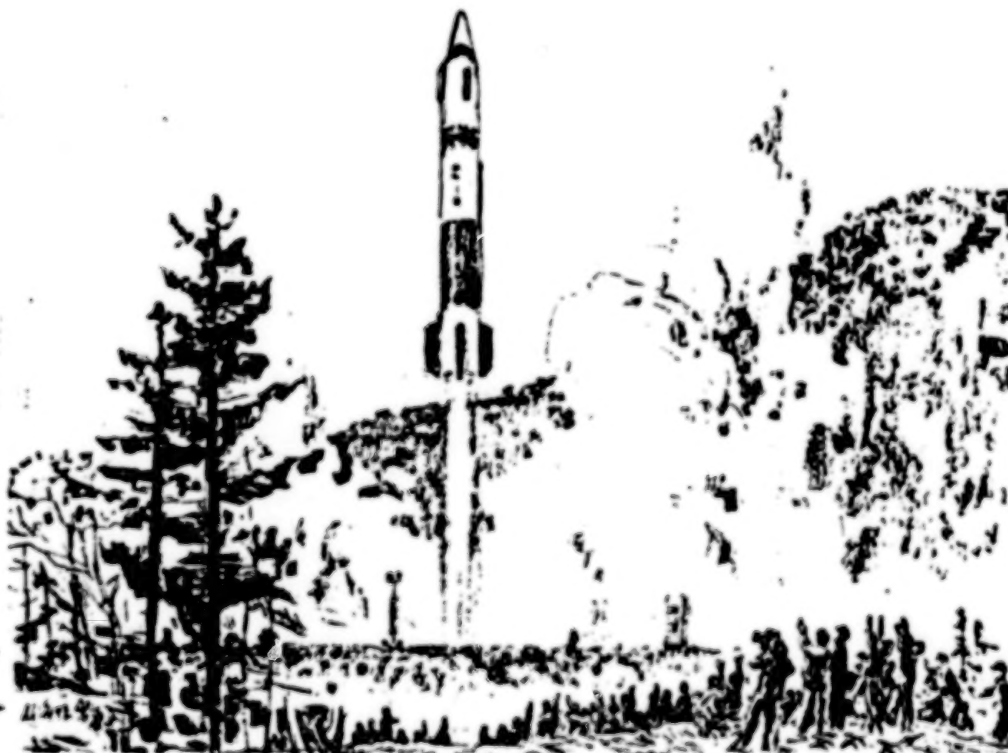


"Normal Tracking Operation"  
Aug 1978 at Linhai [2651 3189]

威  
震  
长  
空

"Power Shaking  
the Skies"

"Thrilling Thunder  
at Linhai"



Beijing JIEFANGJUN WENYI [PLA LITERATURE] in Chinese No 2, 1 Feb 79  
inside back cover





加强研究早日实现国防现代化

"Step up Research to Bring About Early  
Modernization of National Defense"

Beijing JIEFANGJUN WENYI [PLA LITERATURE] in Chinese No 1, 1 Jan 79  
outside back cover

## MILITARY AND PUBLIC SECURITY

### HONG KONG PRESS PREDICTS PRC MANNED SATELLITE BY 1980

Hong Kong WEN WEI PO in Chinese 24 Jul 79 p 2 W

[Article translated by Xiao Shi: "China Masters Technology of Launching Manned Satellite"]

[Text] Editor's note: The following are translated excerpts of an article by Chiyomichi Miyaoka entitled "Steadily and successfully engaged in research and production of man-made satellite, China may be able to launch a manned satellite by 1980. It has developed four types of guided missiles." The article is carried in the 3 July issue of NEWS INTERPRETATION, a magazine published by the JIJI NEWS AGENCY of Japan. [End of editor's note]

On 25 April 1970, [China] loudly announced its success in launching a satellite.

Although during the gang of four period, China's satellite research program was subjected to attack under the slogan "the satellite soars to the skies, but the red flag falls to the ground," yet China has reportedly carried out eight successful experiments in launching satellites. It may try to become, by as early as 1980, the third country in launching a manned satellite, after the Soviet Union and the United States.

I would like to take this opportunity to talk on China's satellites, on the basis of the limited data available.

#### PLA "Second Artillery" Is Guided Missile Force

Any talk about satellite must inevitably touch on guided missiles, because without guided missiles as carriers, it would be impossible for the satellites to reach outer space.

I am not well informed about the time when China started its guided missile research and production program. There is a so-called "Second Artillery" in

the PLA artillery force, reportedly to be the "guided missile force" of the PLA. It is said that Second Artillery was established in 1965, based on the concept of the Soviet strategic rocketry force. In view of the fact that in 1965, the Second Artillery was already in existence at the regiment or division level, it may be assumed that China had embarked on guided missile research work earlier than 1965.

In 1960 when the Soviet Union withdrew all its technical personnel and stopped its aid to China, China was obliged to step on the difficult road of self-reliance. Fortunately, by that time China had already had several guided missiles and some blue prints from the Soviet Union.

Hence, China now possesses four types of guided missiles. They are the CSS1, built after the Soviet SS4, (with a range of 950 kilometers and launch weight of 27 tons), the CCS2, built after the Soviet SS5, (with a range of 2,400 kilometers and a launch weight of 40 tons), the CSS3 (with a range of 6,500 kilometers and an unknown launch weight), and the CSSX4, under intensive research and production, (with a range of 11,000 kilometers and an unknown launch weight). It is believed that among these guided missiles, the CSS3 is the one that launched most of the satellites.

#### The First Satellite Weighs 170 Kilograms

According to an announcement by China, the weight of China's first satellite was 170 kilograms. This figure shows that this satellite was twice the weight of the first satellite of the Soviet Union, the first country in the world to have launched a satellite. It also means that China has long possessed considerably high technology. Furthermore, according to Chinese releases, the second scientific satellite (launched on 3 March 1971) weighed 221 kilograms. This again gave people the impression that China's missile and satellite technology was improving. The consecutive launches of satellites in 1970 and 1971 were followed by problems arising from internal power struggles. Launchings were temporarily suspended until 26 July 1975, when the third satellite was launched.

This was distinguished from the previous launches by a very low Earth orbit. This served to show that China was steadily developing the technology needed to launch reconnaissance satellites. According to Chinese releases, on 26 November 1975, the fourth satellite was launched, and it was successfully recovered on earth 2 December. This seemed to prove this point.

It must not be neglected that if it is possible to recover a satellite, it is also possible to load the satellite with certain things for carrying out cosmic experiments. Based on this fact, Western observers have voiced the opinion that China may possibly have carried out experiments with animal-carrying satellites. This opinion can hardly be negated.

### There Are as Many as Eight Launchings

Since then, one satellite after another was launched. The fifth was launched on 17 December 1975, followed by the sixth on 30 August 1976, the seventh on 7 December 1976 and the eighth on 26 January 1977. Regarding the seventh satellite, the Chinese authorities made a special announcement that they had "accurately recovered the satellite on the ground." From this it can be seen that certain things were recovered from outer space.

At the very beginning, the weight of China's first satellite was 170 kilograms. The weight, of course, increased everytime another satellite was launched. Recently, they have even reached the stage where they are able to launch a satellite of 1,200 to 1,900 kilograms. It has also been reported that the CSSX4, which China is now developing, possesses a capacity similar to the American Titan guided missile. Its launch weight can also be expected to be probably close to 200 tons. Judging from this point, it is naturally very probable that China can launch a satellite as heavy as a manned one. U.S. intelligence has also disclosed that China has concluded experiments with animals (dogs and mice). Therefore, we may naturally infer that China has collected fairly complete data intended for launching a manned satellite. The minister of the Seventh Ministry of Machine-Building, who visited Japan last year, actually said: "We have completed development of the technology for launching manned satellites." Moreover, what was surprising, he also disclosed that they are currently working on a project that is called a space laboratory.

China is now carrying out its "four modernizations." In a certain sense, its success in launching satellite and in nuclear experiments has a tint of political significance accompanying the realization of the four modernizations. In this connection, China will pay considerable attention to cosmic exploration in the future.

CSO: 4005

GUIDED MISSILES ARE POISED IN READINESS

Beijing JIEFANGJUN WENYI [PLA LITERATURE] in Chinese No 10, 1 Oct 78 p 10

[Poem by Wen Yao [5113 6460]: "Dream"]

[Text]

The great forest is at sleep,  
It dreams a green dream;  
Only when a mountain breeze sweeps by,  
It can be heard that it snores in whirring rhythm.

Oh, great forest, you cradle of green foliage,  
Many thanks for your opening a canopy of jade,  
Where missile-launching operators carry out noiseless exercises,  
To safeguard you in deep sleep.

The operators work with beads of sweat on foreheads,  
The old technicians carry out trials and tests in great spirit,  
The command cars are tense in their nerve system,  
And the signal lights keep their eyes wide open.

Behold, the towering guided missile is now in position,  
Like a gigantic dragon ready to take off.  
Oh, beautiful great forest,  
In your sleep, a new pinetree has presented itself.

When the thousand-li forest sea wakes up at dawn,  
When the 'treasury of green foliage' becomes noisy with birds' song,  
The young missile-launching operators will have completed combat readiness,  
Ready to deal a fatal blow to those who play with fire all along.

CSO: 4005

MILITARY AND PUBLIC SECURITY

POEM IN PRAISE OF SATELLITE RECOVERY

Beijing JIEFANGJUN WENYI [PLA LITERATURE] in Chinese No 3, 1 Mar 79 p 48

[Poem by Wang Chun [3769 4783]: "Satellite Returns With News of Triumph"]

[Text]

Sky is high, cloud is thin, and autumn night chilly,  
A group of heroes are fighting heroically at the Gobi Desert,  
In the past they had dreamed to capture the moon in heaven,  
But today, their guided missiles illuminate the sky with red flame.  
A satellite is playing music of the motherland from outerspace,  
When it returns, we spread the great news of triumph.

CSO: 4005

MILITARY AND PUBLIC SECURITY

PICTURE PRECEDING 'EYES OF GUIDED MISSILES'



Beijing JIEFANGJUN WENYI [PLA LITERATURE] in Chinese No 5, 1 May 78 p 55



PRC GUIDED MISSILES HAVE IMPROVED GUIDING SYSTEM

Beijing JIEFANGJUN WENYI [PLA LITERATURE] in Chinese No 5, 1 May 78  
pp 55-57

[Prose by Chen Zhiyue [7115 1807 6390]: "The Eyes of Guided Missiles"]

[Text] After a spring rain, the mountains appear greener than ever. The spring breezes sweep over them to bring about some continuous ripples in the sea of green foliage.

Deep in the mountains in the sea of forest, several "pinetrees" on a peak gradually shift to one side. Suddenly, following a bright lightning across the peak coupled with an earth-shaking burst of thunder, a guided missile emerges like a dragon of fire from the sea of green forest, rising up in the midst of thunder and lightning from a bed of billowing maroon-colored smoke to pierce through the clouds and soar above the atmosphere. With overwhelming power, it flies toward its projected target area...

The great earth trembles underneath, and the flock of mountain peaks are startled with open eyes, seeing a guided missile shooting straight into the seventh heaven.

It is my first experience in participating in the launching of a guided missile. Needless to say, I am utterly thrilled. Every recruit knows how he is thrilled in firing the first shot with a rifle. What if the first shot is a guided missile!

Team leader Lei Zhengang [7191 2182 0474] is a sharp contrast to us recruits. Gluing his eyes to some meters, he appears as cool-headed as if he was in a laboratory, rather than at a thundering launching site.

On the fluorescent screen, the guided missile appears as a white speck, flying at increasing speed toward its target while an electronic clock is clicking audibly, "da, da, da."

"The guided missile hits its target!" This announcement comes like a soothing spring breeze. I am so intoxicated that I am deaf to the rest



of the announcement. Triumphant delight sweeps over the whole launching site.

"Team leader, have you heard?" I grasped the hand of the team leader.

"You are so overcome with delight," he says with a kindling smile while still busy at recording the data.

"The sun is setting at the western hills beneath red clouds, and the fighters who conclude their target-shooting exercise return to their barracks..." so goes a song sung by the fighters who have concluded their live-missile target shooting practice and who are marching in step at the foot of Qingshan [7230 1472] to return to their camp.

The mountain breeze brushes the fighters' uniform clean, and the air is particularly clear. The leaves of white poplar trees and needles of green pinetrees glitter with pearls of moisture from the spring rain the previous evening. Looking at the blue skies washed clean by the spring rain and the colorful rainbow over their combat position, the fighters are drunk with speechless delight.

Prior to the launching, a leader joins us members of the launching company [fa she lian] in studying wise leader Chairman Hua's glorious directive, "exercise extreme care in carrying out organization and command." We are all in high spirit and full of excitement.

As we take up our combat positions, team leader Lei writes with a thick red pencil the following words on behalf of our target-aiming team [miao zhun zu 4178 3294 4809]: "Let guided missiles have eyes so that each and every one of them will hit the enemy on his head!" As soon as the team leader hands these words of our determination to the instructor [zhi dao yuan], a "combat" siren [zhan dou jing bao] is heard loud and clear throughout the whole launching site, and our team and the whole company immediately take action to start the launching operation...

At the combat review meeting [Zhan ping hui], all participants are delighted. To celebrate the launching success, we empty a sack of walnuts on the earthen bed. The walnuts are what was brought back by our deputy team leader when he paid a visit to his home. All the comrades are overjoyed.

"This missile has hit the target right on the nose. What a difference since the 'ten shoulds and ten shouldn'ts' were taught us!" someone remarks.

"Little Zhao [6392] acted so quickly as if he were a squirrel," another says.

"Oh, what do I know; I am still a recruit," I reply, but I am not unhappy at heart.

In great delight, the participants in the meeting sum up their experiences while shelling the walnuts. Half-lying on the earthen bed, the team leader quietly listens to the words of others. With occasional smiles, he carefully takes down notes, absorbed in deep thinking sometimes.

Taking up a walnut with three fingers, I remark in high spirit, "This target-shooting exercise is like picking up a snail with three fingers--an assured thing. In possession of this modern target-aiming apparatus [miao zhun yi], we are like good hunters with new rifles. The guided missiles now act as if they had eyes--they fly to wherever they are directed."

The deputy team leader says in a nasal tone: "This squirrel seems to be quick in words also."

"Don't be fooled by his bull shit. Who can say that there is no degree of error in our target-shooting this time?" This is the remark of Meng Danlu [1322 1129 3662]--a man from the same home town with me--making me blush all over.

At this junction, team leader Lei speaks with articulation: "Xiaohui [2556 6540], can you tell me how many meters the guided missile deviated from its target point?" This question came to me so suddenly that I was dumbfounded...

Scratching my head, I can come up with no answer, displaying a red face.

"Squirrel, have you become a clumsy cow?" These words from Danlu embarrasses me some more. I glare at him with no expression.

Then, to me and to all members of the team, team leader Lei says: "In today's live-missile target-shooting practice, yes, we have successfully fulfilled our assignment. You have done well in your coordinated operations and have done so with wholehearted devotion. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement. Does it truly follow that having modern equipment alone is sufficient to assure that the guided missile would hit wherever it is directed? Also, you seem to be so overcome with joy that you forget all about the deviation of the point of impact from the target point. If the high command ordered us to fire another missile, how could we correct the deviation if we do not know the precise point of impact? In the event of a real war, how could we carry out successive launching on that basis? Although as far as guided missiles go, a little deviation may still enable us to destroy the enemy target, yet how could we allow our missile to hit the lip of a silo [jing pang 0064 2460] instead of the silo mouth [jing kou 0064 0656], insofar as our missiles have eyes?"

I have served in the company for over a year, and it is the first time that the team leader addresses us with such pungent remarks, making me blush all over again.

That evening, I toss about on my bed without getting any sleep, and I can hear that the bed of the team leader which abut on mine is squeaking also.

Team leader Lei is a famous "pace setter in military training" of the whole regiment. He is also the "technical innovation pace setter" of the company. In the 10 years and more since his enlistment, he has had the honor to meet with respected and beloved Premier Zhou at the guided-missile test ground on two occasions...

My trend of thought continues in the same manner as the rain outside of the window. It brings me back to early 1976 when I first joined this company, and the company was assigned to carry out overall training for 3 months in preparation for carrying out live-missile launching tests.

Deep underground was a brightly lit room where radio transmitters rattled with "di di" signals, with computers showing the launching data, an automatic recording machine rolling out thousands of digit numbers, and the control panel glittering with countless twinkling signals.

We seven or eight recruits were under the tutorship of team leader Lei who toiled and spinned like a top every day. To help me overcome a habitual tendency toward making a particular kind of mistakes in calculation, he worked overtime to give me personal instructions and guidance. He even looked up scores of books in the library on two Sundays. He was so devoted to the work of training recruits that the models built by us were the result of his sweat and labor and the meters we used seemed to be indicative of his nerve system.

At the height of the recruit training program, however, a cold wave invaded us. One day, referring to an article on a newspaper just received, I asked team leader Lei: "How can the study of technology for improving one's professional skill be regarded as 'following the road to becoming bourgeois specialists'? Is not this a criticism against Chairman Mao's teaching about 'war preparedness'?"

Knitting his eyebrows, he puffed a cigarette heavily and then quickly snuffed it out, forcefully throwing my newspaper on the floor. Then he said with great determination: "Can you forego farming upon hearing the chirp of some insect pests? Let them chirp to their hearts' content, but let us do whatever we are told by Chairman Mao. We cannot go wrong that way. Without war preparedness, are we prepared to be a captive people when the enemy comes?"

At a "military training mobilization meeting" held by the company party branch at Songshuping [2646 2885 0988], a place where the communist guerrillas used to camp in the olden days, team leader Lei Zhenggang articulately read aloud twice: "It is a merit to study technology for improving professional skill in the interests of the revolution, and it is honorable to do so in the interests of war preparedness." In the teeth of the evil wind generated by the "gang of four," we continued our training without any interruption for advancing war preparedness. Our team has won "excellent" marks in our training ever since. But how could I fail to remember the degree of deviation in the guided-missile target-shooting exercise today?

With the quick elapse of time, several months have passed us by unnoticed. During this period, however, our company has adopted more than 30 innovations in our training. To minimize deviation in guided-missile target-shooting, team leader Lei has spent much time on improving the computing operation of the automatic target-aiming apparatus [Zidong miao zhunyi].

It was summer, and the noisy cicadas made it impossible for us to take naps. I discovered that the team leader always spent his afternoon rest period in the underground tunnel instead of at the dormitory. I thought to myself: "The team leader must have chosen the tunnel for taking his afternoon nap, as it is cooler in summer but warmer in winter there. Good for him!"

One day after lunch, I saw the team leader went into the tunnel again. I followed him with a folded raincoat in hand. In the tunnel, I spread my raincoat on the cement floor for enjoying a cool afternoon nap. When I lay down on it, sure enough, the soft breeze in the tunnel cooled me off very quickly.

But I suddenly heard the familiar noise of a computer. I quietly opened a door to look inside. I found that the team leader was working with the computer with great concentration of mind.

Signal lights on meters were twinkling when the team leader turned his head to see me, upon hearing the door-opening noise. He broke a brief smile and then continued his work. When I went close to him, I noticed that the back of his chair was wet with his perspiration.

"Xiaohui, why don't you take a nap? I am still tackling these digit numbers in puzzlement." For improving the accuracy of the guided missiles, how the team leader exerted arduous labor under profuse perspiration.

Then I came to know why the team leader skipped afternoon naps. I felt myself blushing again, because I witnessed the ardent enthusiasm and ocean-deep patriotism of a revolutionary fighter.

I urged the team leader to take a break for the sake of his health. He shook his head, but started to tell me a happy event in the past: "It was a fine day when respected and beloved Premier Zhou came to us. He inspected our launching site with keen interest, and wrote the following inscription for our unit: 'Be serious and sincere, work exhaustively and meticulously, and assure reliability so that there is no possibility of failure.' These words from the premier were deeply ingrained in the hearts of our comrades who warmly shook hands with him. After that, we gave a spectacular demonstration of our training."

Working at his desk, the team leader tried his utmost to scale heights in science. He silently tackled the data through calculation, letting beads of perspiration roll down his broad forehead. Then he wiped out the sweat from his forehead and said to me passionately: "I have spent quite a few sleepless nights on the deviation problem which remained unsolved during our last practice. Relying on their atom bombs and guided missiles, the imperialist wolves are glowering at our great motherland with greed. We must train ourselves more painstakingly to improve the accuracy of our guided missiles. If the enemy dares to throw atom bombs at us, we must immediately hit back with our guided missiles in return."

We began another live-missile launching exercise. The fruit of the industrious labor of the team leader received the support and encouragement of the high command concerned. In that practice, we applied the new method figured out with computer by the team leader.

As the colossal dragon soars to the sky with a blast of spring thunder, I am shaken and thrilled by the two pieces of cloud shooting up into the azure canopy and the earth-shaking thunder of the guided missile. Is not our army unit advancing in the same way as the rocket which leaps up and soars into the skies with overwhelming power?

CS0: 4005



## MILITARY AND PUBLIC SECURITY

### AN ACCOUNT OF MISSILE TEST BASE

Beijing JIEFANGJUN WENYI [PLA LITERATURE] in Chinese No 11, 1 Nov 78  
pp 59-61

[Prose by Chen Zhiyueh [7115 1807 6390]: "At a Guided Missile Launching Site"]

[Text] Pillars That Buttress the Sky

Is it an imaginary mountain from a fairy tale? At night the spring wind sighs in the pines. Amidst the peaks at Hongshishan [4767 4258 1472], a new peak suddenly appears. A closer look reveals it as a silvery, radiant guided missile standing amidst the numerous peaks. The missile inclines its head against the vault of heaven; indominate and proud, it stands erect upon the launching pad.

The pine forest is the missile's clothes and the white clouds its wings. A pillar of ponderous might that buttresses the sky, supported by towering mountain ranges and the solid earth. Neither "the compass to chart the seas" nor the "club that weighed a thousand jin [0971]" of Monkey King's fairy tales can compare with our rockets nor surpass our missiles!

The base commander lightly strokes the missile's fins and strokes this "pillar that buttresses the sky." His weather-beaten face from the winds and frosts of the battlefield look like a blossoming golden chrysanthemum. The company commander of the Eighth Route Army of those years recalls again the horrible war of those years.

In 1942 of those arduous years, when surrounded by an impenetrable wall of the Japanese enemy, he had led a company that was holding a hilltop in the mid-section of the Great Wall. Gunpowder smoke filled his position. At the foot of the hill lay enemy corpses helter skelter. Like hailstones, the enemy's shells struck the supporting timbers of the fortifications, hammering the company commander's mind. Listening to the whine of the enemy shells and looking at the soldiers fallen in the bloody battle, the company commander ground his teeth till they hurt. If only he had a few mountain guns, his comrades would not have to shed so much blood.

.....Now, standing before his own missile, proud and gratified, all sorts of feelings welled up in the commander's mind like an onrush of wind soughing in the pines.

A turn of the head brings into view a fleet of command cars winding like a long dragon along the bottom of the gorge and converging like an iron stream. The "pillar that buttresses the sky" stands stolidly among the mountains, ready upon command to fly in the direction of the man-devouring demon.

The guided missile is taking on fuel just like the jade dragon of legend sipping water.

Open the valves, increase the pressure, and the maroon fuel courses through the body of the missile. Tremendous pressure is applied to a column of liquid, and the body of the missile stores up fire. The fuel tanks are filled with potential thunder and lightning. This fire, this thunder, this lightning are linked to the stormy revolution on the five continents!

The fueler looks at a red and green indicator light, adjusts a dial, and pours into the missile the hopes of the party and the trust of the people. He compresses the class will into the body of the missile. Each of the numbers inscribed on the dial are etched into the mind of the warrior, and the fuel lines are connected to the warrior's veins.

A smile flickers across the face of the young fueler, and both of his bright eyes brim with a deep feeling of love for his homeland. This warrior, born in the era of the Great Leap Forward, looks at the words on the body of the missile: "Independence, Initiative, Self-reliance, Hard Struggle," and he feels proud and elated. Quickly, he increases the pressure.

The commander looks at the young fueler and remembers the signalman sacrificed at the ironwalled encirclement. The two lads resemble each other so much!

He inquires of the warrior: "What fuel are you filling it with?"

After the warrior fully answers the commander's question, he says, "It is also being filled with a warrior's love and a warrior's hate as well as a warrior's painstaking care and youthfulness." Having replied, the warrior pressed the potentiometer and the indicator needle on the pressure gauge moved to its highest point.

The commander nodded his head. Fishtail-like lines of satisfaction appeared at the corners of the old warrior's eyes. Young rocket warrior, you have spoken what is in both our hearts!

## Spring Thunder and Fresh Flowers

The azure sky looks like washed crystal. The lush green pine forest murmurs and stretches itself toward the morning sun in the spring sky. The ground carpeted with green grass, the reflection from the mountains red as fire, the forsythia golden yellow, and in the distance the blossoms of peach and pear meet the rosy clouds at the horizon.

Booom! The guided missile has ignited. Amid the dense smoke a gigantic pink flower of incomparable magnificence blossoms on the grass meadow, and in the blinding flash the gigantic flower soars like a night blooming cereus, changing from pink to red to brown and then to pure white, flying toward the mountain peaks and flying toward the sky.

Against the backdrop of an azure canopy, the flower that blossoms at the mountain peak is more beautiful than a rose or a peony. On the earth below and in the heavens above, two flowers vie in beauty.

The launch company commander peers through his binoculars, and when he sees the carefully tended flower finally burst into bloom within the launch area, his thoughts tumble about. He watches the white glow become smaller and smaller as it flies farther and farther away, and he carefully draws a small diary from within his tunic.

The red plastic covered little diary records the company commander's joys and happinesses, records the history of the cultivation of the fresh flower in the blue sky, and records the travail of the gardener painstakingly watering this flower in the blue sky. Why is this spring thunder so loud? Why is this gigantic flower so fresh? The little red-covered book carries the company commander's thoughts back 12 years ago to the missile test base.

Very early one morning, the test site seethes with excitement. The tall launching gantry stands erect. Pine branches wave lightly in hands to welcome a most beloved person--the beloved Premier Zhou is coming to inspect the site, to observe the warriors' rocket unit. Then the launch company commander of these new soldiers polishes over and over again the instruments on the control panel till not a speck of dust remains on them. With agitation and concern he readies a briefing, carefully repeating the command and repeating the several motions for ignition.

But when the most beloved person arrives at his side, when the premier arrives with a smile before the control panel, the controller becomes somewhat flustered. He salutes the premier several times, but speaks not a word of the speech he had earlier prepared. His lips move: "Premier. This is our own missile....."

The premier sees how he feels and laughingly shakes the warrior's hand. "Young man, how do you work these electronic instruments?" The controller



calmly stands erect. "Ba, ba, ka, ka, ka," he opens the switches. The red and green lights smile gayly at the trailblazers. The electric keys click; the computers pulse; and the radar antenna vigilantly revolves. The indicator lights blink their eyes brightly; a string of numbers flashes on the lighted display screen. Every corner of the launch site is gripped by tension and an atmosphere of battle.

Premier Zhou chuckles: "Well done. Our rocket troops show promise."

The towering launch platform has been tested by the trailblazers, and the strong, huge hands of the trailblazers stroke the gauges made in China.

"Every cadre should take part in the exercise beginning with the squad leaders." The premier's kindly look shows affection and every laugh line in his face is filled with happy expectations. The warriors inscribe the premier's exhortation on their hearts.

"Ignition," the battalion commander commands. The young controller courageously, decisively and precisely pushes the "ignition" button and on the face of the control panel, the red light opens their eyes.

Suddenly, at the tail of the missile maroon smoke gushes upward toward the top stage of the missile. At once, a golden glow flashes across the test site and a tremendous boom like spring thunder shakes the earth and shatters the vast sky! Smoke, fire, and clouds from two huge flowers open on the ground and extend high into the heavens.

Is it a gale or a torrent that stirs the flowers in the blue sky? This flower so flourishing, so gorgeous, so sublime. The endless mountain chain is her stem, the boundless forests and seas are her green leaves. The good earth is the soil that grows the roots of the gigantic flower. Premier Zhou, hands on hips, appreciates the huge flower. Among the white clouds in a blue sky, the flower--swirls into a mushroom cloud, changes, and in the midst of the sound of spring thunder, it grows bigger and bigger. In the heavens above and the earth below, two floating clouds, two huge flowers vie in beauty.

At an evening reception, Premier Zhou lifts his glass of wine in a warm toast to the officers and men of the unit. Young warriors. This is a glass of sweet and fragrant nectar. Drink it down! This wine glass brims with a pervasive love; it is the premier's faith and hopes for the rocket troops.

After the premier has gone, the wine glasses he and the controller clinked in toast are placed in the unit's hall of honor. The premier's graciousness is etched in the hearts of the officers and men, and the premier's exhortation is dissolved in the blood of the warriors.

The spring thunder has been ignited by Chairman Mao and Premier Zhou. The flower in the blue sky has been cultivated by them personally. No power can hold back the mighty sound of the spring thunder, and no power can prevent the blooming in the sky of the flower. No matter how shrouded in ice the earth may be, and no matter how bitterly cold, the brilliant rays of the sun will shine and melt it all away. The fresh flower that Chairman Mao and Premier Zhou have carefully watered will bloom forever.

"Organize with care and command with care." This guidance from Chairman Hua stands as a beacon. The hot blood of the controller, the fueler, and the computer personnel is excited with a new power. This blazing power, like the torrent spewed from a rocket, shakes the universe, topples the mountains, and overturns the seas.

.....The launch company commander fishes a pen from his pocket and writes in his diary just four words, "direct hit on target." Like a peach blossom in March, his whole face is aglow.

#### Fluorescent Screen

The mountains, the water, the stars, and the moon appear once again on the screen. The mountains and rivers of the homeland present a panoramic view. The spring scenery floods the screen, and on the screen the mountains and rivers appear more lovely.

The fluorescent screen also depicts a leaden sky, dark mountains, and black waters. At the northern border of the endlessly rolling soil of our homeland, a flash like a phosphorescent glow appears. The phosphorescent glow emits a green color that cuts across the leaden sky, the dark mountains, and the black waters. The phosphorescent glow from an evil dragon that flies from out of the sinful launching silo and from out of the depths of the sea faintly appears and disappears in the heavens, the earth, and the seas.

Watch it. Are not the glittering blips like the green eyes of a wolf? Flashing as if to devour someone.

Keep your eyes on it. No matter how closely it skims a mountain range or the surface of the water to hide itself, our radar tracks it, and locks on to the glowering evil specter.

Record it. The computer records the trajectory of this guided missile to describe its flight path and print out the claw prints of the evil wolf. The phosphorescent blip wobbles upward and suddenly descends to hedgehop along. The data on the screen tell us that this is a clumsy "Polar Bear No 11" intercontinental ballistic missile.

Suddenly, white spots appear on the fluorescent screen. In the twinkling of an eye they become transformed into a flurry like snowflakes in winter, flickering everywhere, and like dunes of sand on a salt beach in a dazzling kaleidoscopic jumble. "Polar Bear No 11's" ferocious body can be seen no more.

The controller knits his brow and the soldier observer bites his lip. Under these special circumstances, the warriors' minds are especially clear and alert. Suddenly the controller pushes a button to activate an anti-jamming device. It sweeps away the evil fog, disperses the dark clouds, and makes it possible for the Monkey King to see with his all-seeing eyes the myriad changes of the evil specter. The soldier observer has no time to thank the warriors, and no time either even to exchange a glance of gratitude. His telescopic eyes quickly, closely, and unrelentingly lock on to the enemy.

Cunning like a fox and daring like a cobra, "Polar Bear No 11" on the screen suddenly multiplies into five, showing itself to be a guided missile with multiple warheads. The faithful computer prints out new data, and a disdainful smirk flickers across the face of the young soldier observer. Evil specter, no matter your myriad forms, no matter if you have 3 heads and 6 arms, you cannot escape from the devil-finding spotlight.

Future wars will be computed in minutes and seconds. In less time than it takes to tell it, the strong electronic interference we release flies to its target, flies toward the evil dragon emitting a phosphorescent glow. Giving it a dose of its own medicine, it is turned into a blind and deaf thing.

The electric motors purr and the antennas hum. Before the fluorescent screen the flying snows are departing to welcome the breezes of spring. Year in year out, month in month out, day in day out, night in night out, our warriors watch the enemy, watch the ferocious tiger and wolf.

Fluorescent screen--eyes of the homeland.

9432

CSO: 4005

"A Visit to 'Site No 9.5'"

# “九号半”记

By Liu Zhaolin

刘兆林



Beijing JIEFANGJUN WENYI [PLA LITERATURE] in Chinese No 4, 1 Apr 79 pp 54-56

DESCRIPTION OF GOBI DESERT LAUNCH SITE

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pp 54-57

[Literary reportage by Liu Zhaolin [0491 0340 2651]: "A Visit to 'Site No 9.5'"]

[Text] Because the Gobi used to be sparsely populated, places where missile bases came to be located lacked names. For convenience, headquarters numbered each unit's location consecutively.

After we had witnessed a missile launch at number X, we went to number 10 to pay a visit. Our whole being was thrilled, and in our jeep we seemed to be flying, and what we saw flying by were not tamarisk trees (*Tamarix chinensis*), or camel thorns, or interminable sand dunes but spouting, roaring, and earth-shaking flames that set people's every nerve to trembling.

Suddenly a sheet of clear water appeared in the distance, and on the water, row after row of small red boats. Could it be that tearing has fogged our eyes? As the jeep advanced, another careful look revealed that it was not water we were seeing but shimmering vapor from the earth, and the seeming flotilla of boats were some squat structures. I asked the comrade accompanying me, "What place is that?"

"9.5."

"How can there be a 9.5?"

"Old Xi and some others are there."

As soon as he said Old Xi [5045] and some others, I understood. For the past several days I had been hearing again and again of the deeds of Old Xi and the others who were right there. At once I asked the driver to change direction and head for 9.5.



Quiet pervaded 9.5. There were neither oxen nor camels. Welcoming us was a slight gust of wind and several slightly swaying tamarisk trees. Dry tamarisk tree leaves littered the ground.....

1

The first one to appear was not Old Xi.

We stood before a red "brick house" that was a little larger than most. On the doorpost was written your name, Li Jiemin [2621 2638 3046]. A senior officer in the armed forces in 1938, you left a millet-plus-rifle unit and, battered by wind and rain and looking like a sturdy old poplar, you struck roots in the Gobi. I have not heard of your startling deeds; I only know you often tucked some steamed bread in your tunic and wandered to every corner of the missile range, gnawing on the bread when you were hungry. Once, when the party committee held a meeting to summarize experiences in a missile launch, you became so excited as to have a heart attack and fell on the ground.....don't worry, old commander, that missile launch was extremely successful.

My escort told me that the master of another pretty and small "brick house" is old warrior Wang Lai [3769 0171]. You, with the tall body as straight as a towering poplar. Once you entered military service, you became a fueller, fueling missiles with special fuel. How could it ever be calculated how much fuel you have put into missiles in the course of 5 years? And that last time, when the fueling was over and you were leaving the site, one of your comrades-in-arms caught fire. You knew that numerous particles of special fuel cling to the body of every fueller, so once he catches fire his life is in danger. But your comrade-in-arms was on fire, and unless the fire was put out there was danger that the fuel trucks would be blown to bits. You rushed forward and put out the fire on your comrade-in-arms only to catch fire yourself. All your hair burned off and your clothes were damaged. Another comrade-in-arms ran to your aid, but fearing you would ignite him and the fuel truck as well, you ran, trailing flames, into the Gobi. You ran and ran, finally stopping far away, and facing the missile launch tower, fell over... Your life became a flame as though awaiting the beautiful flame when a missile is launched.

2

Oh. This "brick house" is Old Xi's.

Old Xi's name was Xi Guangxing [5045 0342 5281]. When young, you never yearned to be a soldier. It was the stately national anthem played at the ceremony of the founding of the People's Republic that brought you to a decision: "With our own flesh and blood we'll build a new Great Wall." A doltish scholar who put on a uniform and valiantly strode across the Yalu River, you became a cultural officer in the volunteer

army, who transported rations beneath enemy aircraft and artillery fire. Watching the warriors die beneath enemy gunfire, you gritted your teeth and hated the enemy while loving the enemy's weaponry within your heart. If we had weapons as good as the enemy's, how much less blood would our lovable warriors shed? The bleeding government pinned a pair of wings to your virtuous heart. The Great Wall of New China needs to be built on warriors' loyalty and the most modern weapons in the world. Facing the flag of the youth league, you swore, "Actively to raise cultural levels and learn modern military science." When the war was over, you enrolled at once for examination at Harbin Institute of Military Engineering [0761 1422 3203 7786 0057 1562 4453 1331 7108] to study air force engineering. You were not overly intelligent and knew yourself to be a dumb cluck who could only work harder to spread his own two wings and arduously hover high in the sky. In 6 years you expended almost 12 years of blood and sweat. At age 33 you graduated and, after a simple marriage, hurried off to our country's first missile base that had yet to fire a missile.

What a base it was! Nothing but a lot of rickety tents pitched on a sea of yellow sand. In the empty tin cans used for cooking was a gruel of narrow-leaved oleaster leaves mixed with noodles, powdered camel thorns, and onion skins. No rain, no snow, no wells, no springs, no grass, and certainly no flowers. Only the boundless Gobi and quite a few attractive storied buildings in which lived the Soviet experts. The buildings contained swanky ballrooms, luxurious baths, exotic projection rooms, and everything else. Helicopters delivered fresh pork and beef daily as well as prawns, beche-de-mer and all sorts of fresh fruits and vegetables to the Soviet experts. You did not envy the experts' such luxurious treatment but, along with your comrades-in-arms, managed to swallow the acrid stuff that passed for food. But when those World War II illiterate soldiers pretending to be experts gave a dressing down to graduates of our military engineering institute as though they were children, that was hard to swallow! You took it and studied, and studied, and studied. Our missiles were eventually sent into the heavens not by Soviet experts but by the hands of our own warriors.

Your faithful and unflagging love for missiles was universally acclaimed by all the comrades. Everytime talk turned to tales of your love for missiles, who did not feel deep respect? You became lost in the testing and analysis of the stabilizers of guided missiles to become a "fool." A person who is fed up with the Gobi says that to stay there one day is like a year, but you have worked in the Gobi for 18 years till you can no longer tell how spring, summer, fall, winter, day, and night follow each other. So that you would take a rest from time to time, your wife bought you a watch. It was a new watch, but once you put it on, it didn't keep time. You always forgot to wind it. Except for guided missiles, you felt use of time in any other way was a waste. Washing your face without soap. One minute and it was done. Taking a bath. Jump into the tub and soak, taking less than 5 minutes. You didn't buy

a comb or a mirror, and you didn't use much toothpaste. You knew nothing about nutrition, and you could not rest. You looked very much older than others of the same age. Some classmates graduated to become heads of organizations, or staff officers, or stationmasters, but you were still a "stable fool." Some people laughed, saying your job was too stable. But you said that a little stability was good in a profession devoted to stabilizers. You were really too stable. You had been in service for 25 years and looked like an old warrior, but your backside had never touched a passenger car. It had always crammed into a truck. Even though trucks rode so rough, you still squatted up there reading a book. Once they let you sit up front in the cab, but you really were a "stable fool." The first time you enjoyed this munificence you didn't know enough to shut the cab door properly and when the truck suddenly turned a corner, you were thrown out. You weren't hurt but screamed, "the centrifugal force is really something."

The wheel of history suddenly turned. The "gang of four" and their mouthpieces cried aloud all day, "Politics can take on everything," and "a satellite goes up and the red flag comes down," throwing many people concerned with day to day matters into a mad tide of wild talk. In the roiling tide, you bent every effort to maintain stability. Shanghai, at that time, was a maelstrom of instability. Several times when you went there in the course of your duties you were struck by what you saw as you went along. Colleagues with no place to vent their anger asked you humorously, "Old Xi, Wang Hongwen will soon become the successor. Please analyze the situation and tell us whether that will work." You categorically said, "I think he is not stable."

There were a lot of things that were not stable! They wanted a "mix" of people in the laboratory, so your office got 8 or 9 warriors to work as technicians. They possessed a lot of youthful vigor and enthusiasm, but their cultural level was low. How could this stabilize a guided missile on its way up into the heavens. You were not afraid to call it as you saw it, and you set up a cram course in mathematics for them with regular lectures and stiff examinations. Anyone who didn't study for all he was worth got a tongue lashing, and those who wouldn't take the tongue lashing were continually nagged at until they did study for all they were worth. Basic mathematics was of no use in the analysis of stabilizers for guided missiles, so you set up an advanced mathematics class for those warriors who had become part of the mix.

Autumn was giving way to winter on the Gobi. A clump of saksaul shrubs lay half buried by the yellow sands of late autumn and it struggled to sway in the wind. You were unaware of the changes in the panorama of nature, but when the seasons of your own life changed, were you not at all aware either? You buried your head in books, prepared courses, ran the computer, and sorted out data. Your comrades discovered that your complexion and your appetite were poor. They asked how you felt and, after you thought a long time, you said your stomach was a little



upset. Everyone understood you. When you said you were a little upset, that meant you were very bad off. They sent you off to the hospital at once for an examination. What is this about an upset stomach? You have broken down from constant overwork. You have cancer of the liver. You were startled but quieted down again very quickly. You thought it might not be cancer and that some cancers can be cured! You took some higher mathematics to the hospital with you, and from your sick bed prepared some classroom notes.

Your reaction time slowed and you felt a pain as though your liver were being pulverized. But you knew your liver wasn't being pulverized, though the pain made it seem so. You tossed and turned on the bed till the skin on your swollen body was rubbed open. You bit your lip and continued to write, to study, to study, to write. You completed a thick outline for class instruction and asked to leave the hospital to lecture. But the doctor rebuked you and you had no choice but to mail the outline to the laboratory for someone else's use in lecturing. You also wrote a letter asking that two books be sent by return mail. One volume was "Principles of Automation." Since higher mathematics formed a foundation for the principles of automation, you prepared to teach a class in the principles of automation once you left the hospital. The other book was Lenin's "Notes on Philosophy." You probably planned to use this book's principles to analyze unstable political currents. After finishing the letter, you laughed and a drop of blood fell from your lip where you had bit it open.

There was no return letter, but the party branch sent the laboratory head and a new comrade to see you. You were reading a book and biting your lip when suddenly you saw your leader. A never before seen fire sprang from your eyes, but you were still so fumbling in speech that you could think of no small talk. You sat up, brushing the beads of sweat from your brow and said, "You have come." Next you said, "Sit down." Then you said, "Is the class in session?" Finally you asked whether they had brought the books you had requested.

The new comrade who had come with the laboratory head placed the books on the bed, and you were so happy you started to talk about your ideas for starting a training class. You talked on and on, suddenly remembering that you did not know the person who had brought the books. So you dropped the topic of the new training class, and asked, "Who are you? Why have you come to see me?"

The laboratory head told you that he was a university student recently transferred to the laboratory. For the first time you realized that some personnel changes had taken place at the laboratory and that plans were underway to withdraw a group of old comrades to an upper echelon. You sat up at once and asked that the party branch not withdraw you. You told him of plans for a higher mathematics class, for a class in automation, and how much of the data about the stabilizing systems on previously launched missiles had not been completed.....

You stopped talking and suddenly bit your lip again, then lay down, your brow covered with beads of sweat. The new college student wiped away the sweat, and you suddenly sat up again to say to him, "Before you begin work, be careful about the effect of the earth's rotation on the 'platform' [ping tai 1627 0669]. This is not in the computer program. The computations are in my notebook!"

You pause to take a breath and continue, "Study while you are young and lay down a solid foundation. Don't be concerned about falling in love. Marriage can wait a little. I was 33 when I married, and my children are all strong...."

The doctor came in and stopped you from talking, making the laboratory head and the student leave the room. You were so upset you felt like cursing the doctor.

The next time the laboratory head and the university student came to see you bringing canned orange juice and canned fruit, you were lying on the bed talking deliriously. The sweet smell of the orange juice perked you up. You opened your eyes, looked at the leader and the comrade, and at the things they carried in their hands and said with great effort, "I...don't...feel like...eating!"

The laboratory head held back his tears, and explained in a weak voice, "We scoured food shops and specialty shops in half the town looking for the pigs feet that are your favorite, but there were none."

You shook your head. "...No...don't waste!" You closed your eyes and rested a while and then said, "Send me...back to...the Gobi, but...cremate me...first..., else the transportation costs...will be...too much. Just...wash this uniform...of mine. Don't...use a...new one. Tell the children...and their mama...not to leave...the Gobi, but...to keep working...by the missiles."

You breathed no more, but lay at rest on your side upon the bed. Your hair, which had not been attended to, looked like a haystack; your face was ashen, and your pursed lips looked as though your teeth were clenched. Tears flowed from your eyes.....

On 10 March 1976 at 9:45, you, a 49-year-old "stable fool" became forever "stabilized" in unstable times.

Old Xi and the others have gone to eternal rest. A rectangular tomb of red bricks is a fitting "small house" for them. Before this house stands a stone tablet on which words have been inscribed. That tablet looks like a missile, and at the same time it looks like a chimney. Still other tablets made of long, pointed planks stand there like advanced missiles pointed toward the sky and awaiting a command.

The escort on my visit explained that people feel they are still living, so each time they pass this spot, they stop to take a look. But just as I opened my mouth to tell the driver in which direction to go, I hesitated. What to call this place? To call it a "graveyard" would be heartless, and to call it a "cemetery" wouldn't seem right either. As time passed, it came to be known as "9.5" because it lies right between number 9 and number 10.

Oh, 9.5. How majestic. Every tamarisk tree, poplar, oleaster, camel thorn, and saksaul shrub are your garlands forever. You are the fuel depot, the launch tower, and the observation station of the missile base...no...you are none of those. You are the most solid red bricks in the foundation of the new Great Wall. At one time Mengjiangnyu knelt in tears over her dead husband and cried "down" the old Great Wall. Today, Old Xi's widow, together with her sons and daughters, plant vegetables, grow grain, and learn culture at the foot of the new Great Wall. On festival days they, together with many others, sweep the grave and place wreaths on it.

Comrades-in-arms at 9.5, please drink an offering of a glass of wine presented by warriors from far away, and please accept our respects. The Gobi of today is no longer a seascape of yellow sand. Please, all of you, look at that revolving radar, that high launch tower, those new storied buildings, and the satellites which fly overhead, as well as the millions upon millions of hearts stirred by those satellites.

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AT A GUIDED MISSILE LAUNCHING SITE

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["Fiction" by Liu Hongwei [0491 1347 0251]]

[Text]

I

The sky was clear, not one shred of cloud. The weather forecast tablet hanging in front of the duty building announced a scorcher: Weather--clear; maximum temperature--38°C. On the observation platform, the wind gauge seemed to have acquired permanent magnetism, pointing fixedly in one direction. In the distance, as if suffocated by the heat, the white poplars around the guided missile launching site stilled their rustling.

Not just the people on the launching platform were soaked in perspiration, but even those in our Meteorological Room felt that little motors had been installed in their hearts. According to "official" information, the launching this time was going to be a new model guided missile. At present, it truly belonged in the "beautiful" category!

Good things came in pairs! At this juncture, the high command sent us the eagerly awaited new group chief. Forecaster Little Zheng said to me mysteriously last night: "Your new group chief took part in several launchings. His skill is excellent! For outstanding work, he received a shining silver medal!" From early morning on, our group had been busy inside and outside the office. During noon rest, I cajoled and coerced the entire group to launch a "personal hygiene movement" to clip fingernails and change shirts. Even the thick mustache on little fat Song Hai's lip was not overlooked, even though he felt embarrassed when picking up the razor for the first time. I pushed my hair behind my ears with my sore arm and proudly relished the "masterpieces" created by me and my comrades: The shining floor which reflected one's shadow, the bright windows melting into the blue sky, the glistening information receiver, and the carefully designed wall arrangement—"Rules for Meteorological Reporters," "Code for Clouds at High, Intermediate and Low Levels,"

"100 Current Meteorological Symbols,"...all lined up evenly. The "Advanced Group in Learning from the Hard-Bone 6th Company" award added a pleasing touch to this neat and clean room.

"I must truly thank Little Zheng. Otherwise, the 'careless' label would have been fixed on my head."

While I secretly played the "Victory Song," the communication officer announced successively "here he comes, here he comes," and led me to the chairman's office.

"Report...."

Before I could get my words out, the chairman announced resonantly: "Come, come. This is Comrade Li Huanming. And this is your assistant group chief Comrade Zhang Zin." The chairman spread his hand toward me.

I sized up carefully the new comrade-in-arms before my eyes--my immediate superior. How should I describe him? His features were neither handsome nor animated. The pair of eyes, which couldn't be considered large, were calm like the center of a hurricane. The eyebrows were rather heavy, but somewhat light in color. Only the two fine lines as if carved by a knife along the slightly thick mouth faintly indicated a bearing which compelled admiration. Possibly feeling hot from the walk? Perspiration trickled down like little streams from his hairline to his swarthy cheeks. Simple and direct, he merely brushed the perspiration with his hand.

I hastily wiped my perspiring palm on myself and laughingly seized his sweaty hand, saying:

"Everyone said that a technical expert was being sent to us. We've been looking forward eagerly to your arrival!"

The pair of calm eyes flashed momentarily, but rapidly returned to its original state. Leisurely he said: "Ah, there's not much to me. I am happy to come to your 'three-learn' advanced group!"

His short-sleeved shirt looked very awkward. It could be his own "innovation," because the cuffs were disproportionately large, so that his well-muscled arms seemed lost in them.

I turned around and giggled. What a strange person! He showed no reaction at all. Naturally, I was not laughing at him completely. I laughed at myself for being too anxious, at how we hustled like a merry-go-round today! But no wonder, I had been accustomed to being haphazard since childhood. My parents were busy all day long studying military science, and seldom had time to fuss over me, and I was content with my lot. Though I changed a lot since joining the army, Zhang Xin was, after all, still Zhang Xin!



The new cement path glistened grey and white under the sunlight. Carrying the luggage, I took the new group chief to meet the comrades. I didn't know what he was thinking about, for he said very little during the walk. He showed no reaction over the careful arrangement of the room. In face of someone who seemed so insulated, I felt quite happy.

## II

I always liked to work energetically, let alone the time just before launching a new model guided missile! The chiefs of our sister groups urged all their members to practice, and even more so the backbone members. The instruments and meters and apparatuses were polished thin. The tension and energy were truly satisfying! But what about our new group chief? Leisurely he held heart-to-heart chats with the comrades one by one, finding out their technical background and inspecting the enforcement of the various rules and regulations. If one wanted to discuss anything with him, it was like dropping a rock into the well, taking a long time before a dull echo. For instance, I was carefully training Lin Xiaoqing, an expert in taking down reports. At the critical moment of copying 200 code units per minute "sprint," he dropped behind, and even made the "6-7" mix-ups seldom made by radio operators. I was so impatient that I wanted to trade my brain with his. Yet the group chief, upon hearing of it, said slowly: "If he dropped behind, let him be. Find the cause. Lay a sounder foundation and he will naturally improve." I was bewildered by his nonchalance. Since he had just arrived, I kept quiet.

To my surprise, similar incidents knocked on the door one after another. A few days ago, Song Hai was knocked unconscious for a while by thunder and lightning while on duty and missed some information urgently needed by some forecasting groups. Some of them complained. I could never tolerate our group being wronged, especially when we were all working so hard. I thought: What more do you want? Not only Little Song insisted on remaining on duty after reviving, but didn't our entire group mobilize to remedy the situation? Furthermore, are you accurate every time you make a weather forecast? Yet the group chief disagreed: "If they complain about us, we should listen. Who told us not to properly install a lightning rod? You failed in your duties, yet you won't permit others to speak the truth!" I didn't know whether to cry or to laugh. Others were in the fire, while he was in the water! I had never met a leader who was so indifferent to his soldiers, a group chief who had no interest in the honor of the collective!

What was even more incomprehensible was that, in recent days, he would switch on the receiver the moment he had time, yet he would not copy seriously. After a while, he would switch the frequencies haphazardly, and write something down in his little blue notebook. The higher authorities ordered our Meteorological Room to use Lanzhou as the main contacting station. But why did he want to find out whether we could

read Taiyuan, Changsha, and Chengdu? I was puzzled. But every time I saw he was in all seriousness, I swallowed the words which were on the tip of my tongue.

There was something even more funny! Someone from his home town told about his visit home one year. When he accompanied his schoolmates, who had come to visit him, to the door, he suddenly discovered a neatly folded handkerchief in his pocket. Looking at the fancy handkerchief with his eyes wide, he asked this one and that one: "Whose fancy handkerchief? How did it get into my pocket?" The owner of the handkerchief, a delicate and gentle girl, was so embarrassed that her cheeks flushed bright red. His schoolmates laughed at his stupidity, and he laughed along with them, not knowing what it was all about....

What could one say when one was assigned such a group chief? When I first met him, I even thought.... Ah! Even the award on the wall glistened restlessly. It was afraid that it might have to leave our group!

### III

While everyone was busy hustling around, the sky opened and the rain poured down. The mountain wind blew the curtain of rain this way and that. The metasequoias, tall as the house, bent all the way down. The rain water splashed on the ground. It was lunch time, but there was no way to muster. One by one we dashed to the dining hall. With the fragrance of the sweet fried dough twists, I recalled the dough twists we had last time for lunch. It was hard to get the dough to rise because of the cold weather, and the kitchen squad was late serving lunch for the first time. We chatted aimlessly waiting for it. Unwilling to waste time, the group chief dashed back to the office to read the foreign language material which had just arrived. By the time he returned to the dining hall, only some crumbs were left in the big serving bowl. Kitchen squad leader Qin Yafen insisted on making some shredded meat for him, but he held half a bowl of dough twist crumbs in his hands and ate with gusto. The warmhearted Qin Yafen explained: "Please do not worry about taking up our time...." He replied: "No, no. I don't have time to wait!"

Thinking about it, I approached Qin Yafen and said: "This time, are you going to let my immediate superior eat crumbs?" She started to giggle. Before she finished, she raised her long lashes and said: "What? Group Chief Li is not here?"

I turned and looked around. Indeed, where was he?

I ran back to the forecasting room. At a distance, I saw two figures on the roof busily bending over something. The wind lifted their raincoats, and the rain ruthlessly splashed on their legs and feet.

"Lightning rod?!"

I seemed to be immobilized by the gravity of the earth. Standing still in the rain, I stared at the metal implement on the roof.

Lin Xiaoqing, who served as the group chief's assistant, informed me that, early in the morning today, the group chief went to the base repair and parts plant to discuss processing a lightning rod.

"Good gracious! It was 40 li of mountain road for the round trip!" I drew in my breath in amazement. Before my eyes, I saw hill after hill and, on the rugged mountain path, a tall young soldier walking against the wind and rain, clutching a glittering metal implement in his bosom. Mud splattered on him, but was immediately washed away by the rain.... Yet, someone said to him: I had never met a leader who was so indifferent to his soldiers....

"Were you so very concerned? Why didn't you install a lightning rod before?" I shouted my dissatisfaction toward myself silently in my heart.

On the roof, Lin Xiaoqing looked like a little boy honored by his big brother's trust. With a conscientious and solemn expression on his round and boyish face, he spared no effort to help the group chief in the task. In recent days, Xiaoqing's slim silhouette was often blended with the group chief's robust figure. I had gotten used to seeing him make use of all available time to practice speed copying. Yet, how did I fail to notice that whenever Xiaoqing turned on the automatic transmitter, the group chief was almost always there? No wonder when I inspected his high speed copying achievement yesterday, I found that not only had he regained his former speed, but he was also steady and accurate. When I deliberately pulled a long face and warned him never to drop behind again, he opened his round eyes and said: "Was that all my fault? It would not have happened if we followed the group chief's tactic of laying a stable foundation...."

"Put your hood up. Look, you are soaked. You'll get sick."

The group chief's voice woke me from my meditation. He was soaked from head to toe, and his ruddy complexion had turned pale in the cold wind of late fall. His tired eyes looked at me with concern. I was puzzled. Beyond my imagination, this undistinguished person actually was so painstaking.

#### IV

"Dididi dadida." With this sign-off signal, almost everyone in the forecasting room lightly let out a long breath.



Possibly all were concerned over the new model guided missile. Today's launching rehearsal was in the nature of a test. The comrades of the various groups all felt differently, eager yet concerned, excited yet tense. Group Chief Yang of the Weather Satellite Receiving Group came to the duty room when it was barely daylight. After developing and enlarging the cloud maps, he laid them down one by one. The forecasters spontaneously got up early, turned on the electronic computer, and carefully rechecked the forecast factors which had been computed and selected repeatedly. Even the very calm new group chief seemed to be unable to keep still. The previous evening he rolled up everyone's high altitude constant pressure surface map and made a special trip to the storehouse for new metal clips for filling in charts. The forecasters could not suppress their excitement. They were so flustered that they did not know how to hold the pen which they used every day. If too loose, it might affect the pattern of the map; if too tight, it might slow the writing speed. Little Zheng got too much ink on his pen, and left a small blue circle on the Pacific in the lower part of the map.

In the past 2 weeks or more, the group chief specially stressed that the wind direction rod must not deviate by even one point. He constantly blocked it with the protractor which he had fashioned himself. At the beginning, I felt that this "new thing" was quite unnecessary. Seeing everyone's straight line improvement in the quality of mapping, I, as usual, silently acquiesced.

Now, like a painter looking at his finished work, I happily admired my completed high altitude constant pressure surface map. The form might not be a model, but at least it was first class. I could guarantee that the wind direction rod did not deviate one point. It was not bragging, but I belonged to the category of forecasters who did not make coding errors.

I shifted my body downward so that I sat more comfortably. Tapping a rhythm with my foot, I glanced at the little maple sapling outside the window about the size of one's thumb. The maple nodded at me incessantly, and I winked back. Not that I was modest, but the cadres of the "Hard 6th Company" were everyone a leader in military technology!

I retracted my line of vision, and noticed the group chief's frown. I felt a little uncomfortable. Drawing closer, I looked at where he was pointing. Oh no! The wind direction rod at the Shaertale station on the edge of Zhungeer Basin was slightly off. With the least bit of inattention, the wind direction rods in the stations of the high latitude regions could easily deviate in a split second. I cursed myself in my heart for my negligence. I looked at it more carefully: "Oh, just a very tiny bit of deviation." My heart resettled into its place.

"A tiny bit?" His light colored eyebrows remained knit. He flattened his palms out of habit.

I understood the meaning of his gesture, and felt very uncomfortable. What? He couldn't even trust my map, and had to check it with the protractor!

The air became rather heavy. Lin Xiaoqing looked at me and at the group chief, and gently passed over his own protractor.

The group chief carefully checked the map and measured the wind direction rod completed by me. For no reason, I felt my cheeks flushed, and I seemed to be holding a miniature food steamer in my hands. I tried to maintain my original composure, and my foot beat a louder rhythm.

The group chief glanced at me, and a light not easily detectable flashed in his eyes. Toying with the protractor, he said thoughtfully: "The error is at a crucial spot. Had it been official launching today...."

Each beat of his words was sharp like a steel needle. To tell the truth, ever since I became a cadre, I had never been rebuked in front of the soldiers. Wasn't he trying to make me lose face? A ball of fire filled my heart, and I swung my arms and left. In the split second when pushing the door open, I saw the group chief kneading his army hat.

In the evening, sitting before my desk, I propped my cheeks in my hands and stared at the wall. Last night I had it all figured out. I was going to make the achievement of a "leader soldier," and this was what I ran into! Angrily I grasped my army hat and threw it on the bed.

The door squeaked open, and the group chief entered. With an obvious appeasing tone, he said: "I know you are dissatisfied with me. Let us have a chat...."

I did not turn my head, nor make a sound. Both of us were silent in disharmony.

Considering my own position, I patiently turned around and offered him my chair, while I got a stool to sit on in front of him, like an elementary student steeling himself for a lecture.

He rubbed a little pebble aimlessly with the tip of his foot, and slowly opened his mouth, as if searching for the right words: "Maybe you still do not understand me.... But it doesn't matter. However," his tone turned serious, "how can you fail to understand the logic? The 'gang of four' tore to pieces the rational regulations and systems, and we were the ones to put them back together again piece by piece! Is it conceivable for us to slap our own cheek? I am truly concerned over how you demand of the soldiers!"

I did not utter a sound. Though forced to admit the logic of his words, I, same as before, wanted to find an excuse to argue.

He seemed to have sensed my psychology, and promptly went and got my weather map from the forecasting room. I was rendered speechless when he placed the protractor over Shaertale. Indeed, it was exactly one point off, changing the west wind to west northwest.

To tell the truth, from the angle of strict training, naturally, we must be meticulous over each point. But actually, in a real launching, with a vast sky, how much error would there be if the wind direction rods of two stations were slightly off?

I was on the verge of expressing what had been on my mind these past several days, but the group chief suddenly asked: "You have studied all the basic theories on forecasting?"

For the moment, I did not know how to answer. The office wanted each and every cadre to study the profession in width and depth. In this period, I was busy over improving Lin Xiaoqing and others, and I had no time to study!

Seeing me at a loss for words, the group chief seemed to be apologetic. After a pause, he looked at me and said: "Read some books, and you will know. From the angle of forecasting, these two wind directions absolutely must not be wrong. It would affect the weather forecast system, and may even create the danger of missing such disastrous weather conditions as gales and thunderstorms."

Though his words were gentle and slow, like clouds floating in a clear sky, I was electrified. His conscientious and solemn expression convinced me that he was not exaggerating, but telling the truth! I regretted that I did not study more like he did.

He was apparently moved, for his calm eyes flashed.

"When the different result of forecast goes to the chief, the handling will be different. If we make a wrong forecast from our wrong information and interfere with the chief's decision, what kind of consequence will it be?"

What kind of consequence? What kind of consequence? Innumerable pairs of reproachful eyes on the ceiling stared at me, right into my heart.

Ordinarily, I would have wanted to find a crack in the floor to crawl into, but today, for some unknown reason, I suddenly became "thick-skinned." I gravely told the group chief: "I am going to the chairman to make a report." I stood up while talking and put on my army hat.

Catching hold of the hem of my jacket, he said: "Let it go this time...."

What? I seemed to have fallen into a 5-11 fog. It was high mountain a while ago, but now it had become a basin in no time!

"Today's communication signaling was like a bowl of clear water and cannot indicate our true achievements. Since we are learning from the Hard-bone 6th Company, we must demonstrate some masterly skills. A while ago, I learned from the forecasting group that there will be a thunderstorm at 2000 hours tomorrow. Let us...."

"You mean that we should hold a rehearsal under strong interference."

He laughed soundlessly. I discovered that, when laughing, his expression, which usually remained still and appeared rather aged, became bright and youthful.

That night, I broke the precedent and suffered from insomnia. My eyes were wide open, as if looking for something in the dark. Gradually, the two glass panes on the door turned into a pair of calm eyes, and the reflection of the giant white poplar became a robust silhouette....

## V

Roll after roll of mysterious fog flowed in the valley. All were tense yet excited in their hustling. The comrades of the Guided Missile Launching Regiment "invited" in the majestic big fellow, adjusted each one of its nerves, and fed it special nourishment--guided missile propellant. At this time, it was the turn of our Meteorological Room to be busy. The satellite receiving aeriels shaped like spirals rotated slowly. In front of the fluorescent screen flashing green lines and red indicators, the resonant voices of the controllers announcing the meteorological numerical bases and the signal sound undulating in the wireless room were like a group of happy skylarks, leaping over the mountain peaks and flying into the depth of the clouds together with the blue painted rocket sounding instrument.

The present was different from the past. The group chief put me in charge. A while ago, we met Regimental Commander Huang of the launching regiment. Patting my shoulder with his thick hand, he said: "Little Xin, do not lightly let go of the time snatched by us in our toil day and night. Ah, the little girl with runny nose of former years now has great power in her hands! Ha ha...." Regimental Commander Huang once worked in my father's research institute and saw me grow up. Afraid that he might continue and reveal to the group chief my "history" of that period, I replied crisply: "Don't worry! Do you think that we are not in a hurry to report success to Beijing?"

Indeed, thinking that we were the ones to determine the fate of the new-model guided missile in the distance, I felt very pleased. Before putting on my earphone, I drank a cup of strong bitter tea, in order to mobilize all the cells in my brain and do a splendid job!

Was it a coincidence? The group chief responsible for overall command today wore a slightly newer dacron army uniform, and even inserted a bright red maple leaf in the pen container. Though his eyes were just as calm as usual, there was more animation in them compared with before.

The Lanzhou station began its call! The clear communication signal took me to the Chaidamu Basin, then to the shore of Bohai. Just when I was rejoicing over the smoothness of the "journey" this time, suddenly, an interference, growing from weak to strong, fiercely charged into my earphone. Looking up, I found that it was the "special product" of our valley--a sudden thunderstorm. I seemed to have fallen into a roaring sea, and devoted my entire effort to capturing the meteorological communication signals which rose and fell.

Strange! All the transmitters were switched on and all the frequencies tried, and even the group chief, the expert, failed to find the complete stations. The electric clock on the wall ticked away. I seemed to see the meteorological reports hovering over the aerials helplessly and flying away. The few stations on the weather map stared at me in mockery. If interference had a substance, I would grasp hold of it and crush it with my hands! But what should I do now? I couldn't just take this mottled weather map to the forecasters for them to solve the riddle! Thus thinking, I began to take off my earphone.

"What are you doing?" The group chief asked somewhat severely.

"I am going to make a report to the leader. If it is delayed, it will be hard for us to explain."

I fully believed it was a good idea on my part, but, to my surprise, his two brows went up and his eyes flashed a light never seen before.

"When the task is not completed, whom do you explain it to? Have you forgotten the regimental commander's words this morning? We are not going to be the ones to waste the time spent!"

"Were you not also unable to copy the broken communication signals?" I retorted righteously.

Fire was going to spurt out of his eyes: "Comrade Zhang Xin, I order you to put on your earphone!"

I kept quiet. Though seething inside, I reluctantly put on the earphone. Immediately, I was engulfed in the ocean of disorderly sound waves.

Thank goodness, the rarely seen powerful interference gradually subsided. Yet, it was only an hour until the concluding time. In other words, we had lost the meteorological data of more than half of China.



I looked out the window. The comrades of the radar and sounding groups had all turned off their machines and were in the process of checking their results. What was even more irritating was that Group Chief Yang of the Satellite Group, on his way to deliver his material to the Forecast Group, proudly waved at us with the cloud map in his hands. At the rally, our two groups challenged each other! I gave him a dirty look. I looked at our group of people and found everyone tensely staring at the group chief, as if they could recoup the lost material from his face.

The group chief patiently leafed through his little blue notebook. Doubtlessly, he was doing his best to conceal his anxiety. I looked at him with a complex feeling: Is it worth the trouble? Whoever started the trouble must end it!

The group chief closed his notebook, stood up, and made a chopping gesture with his big hands: "Pay attention! Listen to my commands! Assistant group chief, continue to use the Lanzhou station. Song Hail! To complete 57 region; use Changsha station. Lin Xiaoqing! To complete 56 region; use Taiyuan station. Wu Hua! To complete 59 region; use Chengdu 2d group. Good! Lin Xiaoqing! Change to Wulumuqi to complete Southern Tibet valley region!...."

It was a brilliant stroke! Gradually, the missing stations were all completed. The weather map seemed to be dotted with flowers, evenly and pleasing to the eye. His "painstaking study" in those days had made a big payoff!

Mountains collapsed! Oceans roared!

The collapse of the mountains and the roar of the oceans could not compare with this marvelous spectacle! I felt as if I were sitting in a giant cradle. The various passwords transmitted through the command cable and the crackling sound of fire merged into a powerful sound wave, ferociously dashing against everyone's eardrums. The "big fellow" was like a giant fire dragon, roaring toward the atmosphere. Rapidly, it discarded the ignition device and flew lightly toward the predetermined target area. In an instant, only patches of reddish brown smoke were left on the launching site.

Half an hour before launching, we withdrew from the site to the safety zone. I asked the group chief for his little blue notebook, and saw in it the neat entries:

How to handle the enemy's electronic interference?

How to adapt to the special characteristics of the guided missile troops and create the maps promptly?



How to....

Further along, it was a comparison chart of the reporting schedule of the various stations and the area covered. With this chart, one would know approximately the meteorological data of which regions and countries covered in the broadcast by the major domestic stations at any given time.

I was greatly amazed. The tediousness and arduousness of this task could not be imagined by the layman! However, it was accomplished by a man of such unprepossessing appearance! I looked at the group chief in excitement and saw that he laughed happily for the first time. He pointed at the groups of people and said: "Assistant group chief, look, so many people are laughing!" I glanced around. Indeed, the designers were laughing; the operators were laughing; the guard soldiers were laughing; the comrades of our Meteorological Room were laughing. Only me, I had not the slightest inclination to laugh. What qualification did I have to laugh? Why was it that he and I, working under the same roof, were so different? At this moment, his commonplace words and actions, sometimes bordering on the ridiculous, appeared clear and sharp on the screen of my mind scene after scene. Suddenly, I heard again his words: We are not going to be the ones to waste the time spent!

First time in my life, I looked at this youngster in front of me with the eyes of a girl, and felt something never before felt by me. His face remained ordinary, without anything attractive. Yet I detected a pure and beautiful spirit in those eyes calm like a deep pool.

At some unknown time, a brilliant and colorful rainbow had appeared in the sky. Ah, he and I, there would be many more guided missiles piercing the clouds enveloped in this gentle and beautiful halo....

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## MILITARY AND PUBLIC SECURITY

### 'MOBILE WARFARE' WITH GUIDED MISSILES

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["Fiction" by Ma Jinfeng [7456 6855 6912]]

[Text] The maneuver had begun. The equipment trucks of the guided missile launching subunit, covered by dark green camouflage nets, moved out their positions and sped down the highway in spirals round the White Tiger Cliff. They soon disappeared in clouds of dust.

The command car led the way, and in the front seat of the car was a veteran commander with a ruddy face. He was Wang Dong, deputy chief of staff, now in command of the subunit on behalf of the commander in the maneuver. At the rear seat was a young man, a vice subunit commander named Chen Lin, sent by a fraternal unit to watch the maneuver. He was of medium height with a pleasant personality, always having an affable smile on his face.

Chen Lin was a fine commander in launching guided missiles from fixed sites. He had had a fine record of landing the missiles within 100 meters from the targets thousands of miles away three times in succession. This young man had a very keen revolutionary sense of responsibility and an ardent desire for improvement. He was not satisfied with his past achievements and always tried to make his subunit famous with not only "three scores in a row" but "a hundred shots, a hundred bull's-eyes"; instead of landing his missiles within 100 meters of the targets, he wanted "every shot to hit the bull's eye." But this time, his ideas met with a challenge, not with regard to the accuracy of the hits, but on tactical grounds. Someone had suggested: "We cannot rely only on fixed launching sites. It should be taken out for mobile warfare!" This was a good, but bold, suggestion. How can such a gigantic piece of equipment, with all its complex accessories, be moved around, well hidden, and yet score accurate hits? Furthermore, how can all the intricate and delicate instruments be protected and repaired without prepared sites? How can we prevent sabotage by enemy spies, or destruction by air raids or air droppings? While agreeing with the need for mobile warfare with guided

missiles, he doubted its practicality. He had heard that Comrade Wang Dong made many new discoveries in this respect, and therefore, requested permission from the higher authorities to travel a long way to learn from a senior unit. This maneuver happened to be under the command of the famous Wang Dong, so he secretly congratulated himself on the good fortune of meeting a good tutor.

Sitting behind this good tutor, Chen Lin thought of many things about his past. Who did not admire Wang Dong whenever his name was mentioned? During the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, he was the brave and resourceful little scout who many times penetrated into enemy strongholds in disguise to gather information. During the War of Liberation, he made quite a name for himself by leading his own company in capturing enemy positions and cities in North China. After Liberation, he was also for a time well-known in building a guided missile unit from scratch. At first, most of the equipment in this unit were only wooden models, because, among some units, the main effort was directed to industrial and other construction projects, or to political education. Wang Dong certainly did not neglect these jobs, but he managed to squeeze every bit of available time for practicing with these models. When people laughed at him for fooling around all day among these wooden toys, like children making bayonet charges with toy rifles, he said seriously: "The structure of guided missiles is surely complex, but it is not so complex for every fighter to handle his own equipment. With these models, I can not only practice the essential techniques, but also improve the methods, style and concept of coordination and combat-readiness!" Surely enough, when the real guided missiles arrived, this unit did not waste a single second in speeding up their installation. The result of launching was excellent.

Since the appearance of spy satellites in the sky, Wang Dong had kept himself busy in his research for some way to avoid detection by satellites. At first, he tried the plan of "a cunning hare having three dens," and carried out many construction projects to camouflage the launching sites. He hoped that, by this means, as soon as the firing order is given, the guided missile would zoom out of nowhere, leaving the enemy bewildered.

After some time, he felt that the method of "a cunning hare having three dens" would not be adequate for the complex nature of an antiaggression war. He started thinking again.

Under ordinary circumstances, fixed launching sites for guided missiles are built of cement. Either in the form of launching pads or launching silos, the site must be solidly built with everything so well arranged that upon the pressing of the firing button, the guided missiles will accurately hit the target. Yet Wang Dong deliberately discarded this idea. On one occasion, after obtaining permission from the leadership and approval from the party committee, he led several staff officers and

an engineer platoon into a mountain. Here a piece of ground was leveled and made firm with a rammer. A set of equipment, designed by himself was placed and a makeshift launching site was built. Later, a launching stand was installed and an experimental guided missile launching was to be conducted from this indigenous launching site. In his own words, a stirring modern melodrama was going to be enacted on this terrain.

It was a tense moment! The guided missile was standing erect and everything was ready for the "Fire!" signal. Suddenly, a creaking noise was heard. Because the ground was not firm enough, its surface yielded to the heavy weight. Fortunately, Wang Dong had previously installed a double-protection device to support the launching pad. The guided missile wavered several times, but did not fall. It was then around "9 March" with a piercing cold. However, the people at the scene were sweating all over. A serious incident was luckily averted.

Since then, everyone thought that Wang Dong would not try any more "melodrama on the terrain." But Wang Dong was not discouraged. When the party committee gave the signal for the experiment to be continued, he decided to take over this task. Despite serious interferences and disruptions from the "gang of four" who were against the use of sophisticated weapons, he never thought of giving up his job for a moment.

When the party Central Committee headed by the wise leader Chairman Hua smashed the "gang of four"--a scourge to the country and the people--with one blow, Wang Dong, who was already over 50, felt as though he had become 20 years younger. He was more eager than ever to resume his "melodrama on the terrains."

While Chen Lin was immersed in his recollection, Wang Dong gave him a cigarette, saying: "Come, have a cigarette. There will be no time for this later."

Chen Lin received the cigarette with a smile. After a few puffs, he pushed it out of the window to let the wind blow away the ashes. This was seen by Wang Dong who immediately turned around to give him an empty cigarette case, saying: "Put the ashes in this thing. Be careful that the sparks do not damage the camouflage net."

Chen Lin accepted the cigarette case and felt quite embarrassed when he saw that Wang Dong, too, was holding an empty cigarette case for the ashes.

After smoking, Chen Lin poked his head out of the window to empty out his cigarette case. He looked backward and saw the whole convoy following. A thought suddenly came to his mind: The camouflage nets on the trucks had turned yellow and looked as though they were covered with a layer of dried grasses picked up from the roadside on the slope. There had never been any pause on the way, so how could this change have occurred?

Chen Lin turned around and, with a look of surprise, asked Wang Dong: "How could the camouflage nets have changed color?"

Before Wang Dong could reply, Little Wu, the driver, burst into a big laugh, saying: "This is the kind of camouflage net invented by the deputy chief of staff for us. Today is the first time it is tried out."

After Wang Dong's explanation, Chen Lin began to understand that this type of camouflage net was specially designed for a guided missile convoy. There was in the driver's cabin a control panel whereby the color of the camouflage net could be made to change according to the color of the ground surface. In a pine forest, it becomes dark green; on coming up the grassy slopes, it turns flaxen; in places where wild grasses have not yet sprouted, it turns yellow like earth; and when the convoy speeds through a green valley, it looks like a number of green grassy mounts.

"Yours is really high-class camouflage," said Chen Lin in excitement.

Wang Dong said calmly: "Mobile warfare with guided missiles is an innovation and can be mastered only through practice. Since you are here, you better take part in our discussion besides acting as a spectator. If you think of any problem, let us hear it so we can all pool our resources to find the solution. Deputy Chief Zhang Tiehu of the sub-unit is behind escorting the convoy. You can have a chat with him when you have the opportunity."

Chen Lin nodded in agreement. However, his mind was preoccupied. He was wondering how the guided missiles, having left the fixed sites, could be launched on the highway. He therefore asked: "Deputy Chief of Staff, there are now numerous types of guided missiles, such as 'surface-to-surface,' 'air-to-surface' and 'sea-to-land'... But how can they be launched just anywhere?"

Wang Dong smiled: "You! You can never give up the idea of fixed launching sites. I felt the same way before, but, sometimes you cannot hunt down the wolf if you cannot leave your child at home. So you have to leave him behind." While speaking, Wang Dong opened his briefcase, fished out a map, and handed it over to Chen Lin, saying: "Look at this first."

It was a "Map of the Distribution of Armed Forces" of the Soviet Union and the United States all over the world. On land, it showed the locations of guided missile bases; in the oceans, there were nuclear submarines. Chen Lin did not understand what Wang Dong had in mind and gave him a questioning look.

Wang Dong said: "Nowadays, the enemies have satellites with espionage cameras several hundred miles above the earth surface. With their long-range electronic observation appliances and so forth, they are watching our military installations all the time. The eyesight of these modernized



scouts is really sharp. Without even being there in person, they can find out almost 100 percent of what is going on in our strongholds. Comrade, we can never relax our vigilance!"

On hearing the word "stronghold," Little Wu, the driver, recalled the story of the deputy chief of staff fighting guerrilla warfare. He asked, smilingly: "Deputy Chief of Staff, did you fight your way into any of the strongholds shown on the map?"

"Now that there are satellites, indigenous scouts like me can't be of any more use!" These remarks from Wang Dong made everyone in the car laugh. He continued: "Don't think that we can relax when our equipment has been camouflaged! The means of reconnaissance are getting more and more sophisticated. We must work out our battle plans on the assumption that the enemy already knows about us." While they were talking, the convoy had already descended from the White Tiger Cliff and entered the Pinetree Plain.

This plain was in fact a basin of a mountain. If they travel westward along the highway for another 20 kilometers, they will arrive in Green Dragon Mountain. On both sides of the highway were flat, newly plowed fields and the upturned clods looked like fish scales sparkling in the sunlight. Each plot of farmland was adjoined by another all the way to the foot of the hill far away.

At that time, a man on horseback was coming from the opposite direction, and raising a cloud of dust behind him. The purplish red horse gradually slowed down to a walk and finally halted at a little distance before the convoy. An old man, who carried a semiautomatic rifle across his back, jumped down from his horse. He was Uncle Cheng, a veteran guerrilla fighter who had served in the same squad with Wang Dong during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and now the commander of Peach Blossom Village Militia Unit. Uncle Cheng stood in the middle of the road, his head held high and his chest out, and raised his hand as a signal for the car to stop.

The car stopped by the side of the road, and Wang Dong was excited in meeting his old friend. Stepping forward to hold the old man's hand, he said: "Old buddy, I knew you would come!"

Uncle Cheng scrutinized Wang Dong's face and said, smiling with pleasure: "I last saw you in 1976. Now you look even younger! Well, everyone in the village thought of you most of the time!"

Firmly grasping Uncle Cheng's hand, Wang Dong said: "I have often thought of you people, too!"

Uncle Cheng seemed unable to control his emotion, so he quickly changed to another subject, saying: "The commanders of the provincial military



district and subdistrict have instructed the Pinetree Plain Commune militia to join in the maneuver. So I am coming to report to my former squad leader." He laughed heartily while talking.

Wang Dong was also greatly excited. He said: "So let us work together to give a good show!"

Uncle Cheng laughed and said: "I don't think a 'democrat' like you can give any good show!" These remarks brought about a general laughter.

Wang Dong stopped laughing and said: "Please inform Peach Blossom Village first that the militiamen of Li Family Village are now ready. The 'General Director' has not yet given the word of command, so we don't know how the show will start!"

Uncle Cheng was afraid that he would be holding up the convoy too long; so he simply acknowledged the message and rode off.

While Chen Lin was watching Uncle Cheng's departure, this thought loomed up in his mind: Since the provincial military district and subdistrict are involved, this maneuver cannot be just a routine one. When he and Wang Dong were about to board the car, the roar of an explosion was heard from behind, and the tremor shook the glass panes of the car windows. He turned around and saw a large mushroom-shaped cloud rising from behind the White Tiger Cliff—the location of the fixed launching site which they evacuated only 2 hours ago.

Wang Dong immediately sounded the atom shelter alarm, and the fighters quickly got off the vehicles and crouched in the shelters provided by the terrain. Wang Dong was hiding in a ditch by the road. He shoved Chen Lin with his shoulder and said: "Now our stage is destroyed. What shall we do?"

Chen Lin laughed but did not speak. He knew that this was a new maneuver. When war breaks out, our guided missile unit would evacuate the White Tiger Cliff in order to preserve the power for a nuclear counterattack. This was what the deputy chief of staff had thought of all along. How farsighted he was! However, now that the fixed launching site has been destroyed, where can we find a new site for launching the nuclear counterattack?

Chen Lin looked at the Green Dragon Mountain far away and thought: Probably the engineer corps is also taking part in the maneuver. It must be busy building a new launching site there!

Just at that moment, an intelligent staff officer brought an air raid precaution order from the maneuver command post, saying that after launching a surprise nuclear attack, the "enemy" had dispatched airplanes heading our direction for a follow-up bombing. Immediately, the noise of an air raid alarm reverberated through the Pinetree Plain.

Wang Dong sized up the situation immediately before them: To avoid the exposure of the equipment as targets, the convoy must be concealed on the spot. But where could there be a safe place of concealment? He quickly surveyed the terrain on both sides of the highway.

Since Zhang Tiehu had not yet arrived, Chen Lin thought that he should contribute some idea to the commander, even though he had come in the capacity of a spectator. However, when he saw the flat surface of land all around, he found it difficult to make any suggestion. He looked farther away, and there was something! Further away on the right, there was a small hill thickly covered with trees. He scanned it with his telescope and found it covered with big and tall pine trees. If the convoy is concealed among this forest, people could not detect it even from the top of a tree. So he presented to Wang Dong his opinion.

Contrary to his expectation, he found Wang Dong shaking his head, saying: "We have tried concealment in forests several times, so this idea is not 'new.' This time, we have to try something difficult. We will do it on the plain!"

Then this thought came to Wang Dong's mind: The targets of the "enemy" planes must be either our military base or the railway trunk line to the east of White Tiger Cliff. Now that the convoy is more than 30 kilometers away from the White Tiger Cliff, it would be safer to conceal it right here. Thereupon, he said to Chen Lin cheerfully: "Now we got it! Over there. Into the village!" He was pointing his finger in the direction of Spring Water River.

The winding Spring Water River flowed from the Green Dragon Mountain and bent to the south at the Yellow Earth Mount. The terrain could be utilized. Wang Dong stopped the convoy and used the walkie-talkie to send for Zhang Tiehu. They held a brief discussion and decided to leave behind a platoon leader to take charge of the reserved truck to be concealed here, while the rest of the convoy continued its advance. Chen Lin wanted to see how the vehicle was to be concealed. His request was granted and he, too, was temporarily left behind. The platoon's action was quick and neat. The vehicle was joined to the side of the mount with ropes and tarpaulins. Next, a special camouflage net was placed on the top, then grasses were cut and earth collected on the spot to be spread over the top thus turning the vehicle into a part of the mount. It would be very difficult for people to detect any difference. He could only watch with secret admiration.

Chen Lin was quite a resourceful commander. He knew that as a precaution against air reconnaissance, full advantage must be taken of the terrain and the surface features for concealment. After watching the concealment of the reserve vehicle, he carefully surveyed the area outside the village for about half hour and found quite a number of advantageous positions afforded by the terrain and the surface features. Then he hurriedly entered the village.

When Chen Lin was in the village, he could not see anything except the mysterious movements of several militiamen around the corner. He could neither hear any noise from the engines of the equipment trucks nor see any shadow of the fighters. Eh! Has the car been already concealed? The street was quiet, and everything seemed mysterious.

Chen Lin looked around. His eyes screened over piles of firewood and heaps of rice stalks, and then a series of low arches over household doors. A donkey was standing by a heap of straw, wagging its tail while eating the straw. Several cocks flew on to the top of a firewood pile where they were pecking at some insects or tidying up their feathers. "There can't be anything here!" He thought. Can the trucks be in the school courtyard? He quickly repaired to the gate and looked in. There were only a set of basketball stands and several poles for acrobatics, but no trace of any vehicle. Then he suddenly thought of something. Clapping his own forehead, he said to himself: "How stupid I am!"

He quickly turned around and lowered his head to look for tire tracks on the street in the hope that the tracks would provide a lead. After taking a few steps, he paused hesitantly. Strange! Not even tire tracks. Probably the convoy did not pass through this village! He shook his head and thought: This can't be right. If it has come across the Spring Water River, it must have passed through Peach Blossom Village. Oh, Deputy Chief of Staff, could you simply fly away?

Chen Lin looked around and soon his feet carried him to the western entrance to the village. There he found the track of half a side of a tire about 1 foot long. Like someone discovering a familiar landmark after losing his way, he hurriedly stooped down to examine the tire treads. He examined them for a while and thought that he had finally discovered something. He was sure that the convoy had passed through this village. It must have left the village by now!

Chen Lin straightened up and felt as though he had cleared up some mystery. He could hardly control a laugh, and thought: In the past, you fooled the devils by obliterating the footprints; today you again try to baffle air reconnaissance by obliterating tire tracks. You are really "mysterious." However, today, I must see where you have hidden outside the village!

As soon as he left the village area, he passed by a kiln and found something wrong again. No vehicle could have passed through this dirt road; not even the trailer could make it without leaving deep ruts. Then where could Wang Dong be?

He looked at the kiln ground and found more than 10 people busily working. Some were mixing mud; others were molding bricks; and the dried bricks waiting to enter the kiln were neatly piled up to form several

walls. To the west of the kiln were several big heaps of firewood for feeding the fire in the kiln, and to the east were several small houses with mud walls and straw roofs. It was about time to knock off for the day, and smoke from cooking fires was coming out of some smokestacks on the roofs. An old man with grey hair and in a black cloth jacket was facing south in the direction of the Yellow Earth Mount, and with his back toward Chen Lin. Below the mount could be seen a party of militiamen in complete combat gear speeding uphill on red horses which resembled a number of fire sparks. The militiamen offloaded anti-aircraft machine guns from horsebacks and installed them among the bushes with the muzzles trained at the sky. A while ago, Chen Lin was so absorbed in looking for the vehicles that he failed to notice two "enemy planes" circling above on reconnaissance. He had searched here and there so long that his stomach began to rumble. Why not ask that old man instead of rushing blindly?

When Chen Lin arrived in the kiln ground, he gave a cough which made the old man turn around. Chen Lin was surprised: Was not this the deputy chief of staff?

Wang Dong smiled and took out a tobacco pouch from his waist. He filled up his pipe, put it into his mouth, and searched his pocket for the match. At that time, the image of a scout in civilian dress appeared right in front of Chen Lin.

Pleasantly surprised, Chen Lin said: "Deputy Chief of Staff, what trick have you played? I almost died of anxiety!"

Wang Dong let out a puff of smoke and said cheerfully: "The trick is intended for the enemy! There are satellites in the sky, and in case of war, airplanes can drop men and equipment by parachutes. Some special agents may have landed here. We must take every precaution! Your anxiety was not without reason. However, the car is not hidden far away. Look..." Chen Lin's eyes followed the direction of Wang Dong's finger. Wang Dong continued: "The 'small mud house' over there is where everybody is. The pile of 'rice stalks' in front of the school and the sunning ground is the command car we rode in. Don't you see the small donkey still eating there!"

"Oh, yes. I was there just a while ago!" Then something seemed to have come to his mind. He said: "If it were not for that damned donkey and the smoke from the smokestacks, I might have taken a more careful look and perhaps seen through the trick."

Wang Dong laughed heartily. He said: "This is called a trick on the eye devised by the commune members for us." He continued: "Look at that 'heap of firewood.' It is our battery car. Two cocks are now lying there! Perhaps these two cocks tricked you like the donkey did!" He laughed again.



Chen Lin also laughed while surveying the street. Because it was close to a mountainous area, every household had a pile of firewood before it. So Wang Dong had taken advantage of this special feature in concealing the car, and he did it so skillfully.

Shaking his head slowly, Chen Lin said: "You are indeed marvelous."

Wang Dong said: "The idea came from the masses. A while ago, the commune members were working at the kiln, but everyone, including the members of the production brigade party branch and a platoon of militiamen, dropped their work to help us. We simply told them what we wanted about the camouflage, and they contributed quite a few good ideas. Otherwise the camouflage job could not have been so quickly and so satisfactorily completed." Then, after a laugh, he continued: "In modern warfare, it is not enough just to deceive the naked eyes. Inside the house are some electronic interference instruments supplied by our fraternal units for experiment. There are also some specially painted sheets to be used as a precaution against ultrared rays and electronic eyes. This is the so-called combination of modern and traditional methods or making foreign things serve China!"

At that time, a "kilnman" showed half of his body above a fence. Then laying both hands on the fence, he agilely lifted himself up and jumped out. Since the house was quite far away from the kiln, Chen Lin could not clearly see the man's face. He only saw him pulling a heavy black rope from below. Wang Dong shouted at him: "Slowly! Don't let the cable rub against the wall!" Chen Lin heard the message being acknowledged.

The voice of that man sounded familiar. Chen Lin took a closer look at him. Lo! There was Zhang Tiehu disguised as a "kilnman."

Chen Lin was about to ask how Zhang could have appeared out of that place, when a laughing crowd entered the street. They were all armed with semiautomatic rifles. Chen Lin has now grown wider and knew that the way to identify people is to look at their faces. In this crowd were genuine as well as sham civilians, and Uncle Cheng was among them.

Uncle Cheng shouted from afar: "Old Comrade Wang, the stronghold at Yellow Earth Mount has been occupied and sentry posts have been set up along the streets. Anything else we should do? Feel free to let us know!"

Wang Dong replied cheerfully: "The main job for militia is to watch the sky. As soon as any 'enemy' plane is detected, concentrate your firing on it to keep it from circling low."

"This job is already in the hands of our antiaircraft team!" Uncle Cheng continued: "I already prepared some Gaoliang wine at noon to celebrate your success!"

"I will be sure to drink your wine. The nuclear counterattack to be launched from the kiln will certainly be successful!"

Chen Lin cast a surprised look at Wang Dong followed by an anxious gaze at the kiln. Is this place in a condition to launch a guided missile? What first came to his mind was the whole set of surface equipment required for a fixed launching site.

"Deputy Chief of Staff, how about the cable..."

"I don't think there is any problem for it to go from one house eave to another!"

"There is no assigned target. How shall we shoot?"

"Our target is 'enemy' No 02. The Maneuver Command Post has already determined the direction and calculated the range for us."

Chen Lin again thought of the several indispensable items for strengthening the launching pad, but none of them could be seen! Then how could the nuclear counterattack be carried out in time! Therefore, he asked: "Is it necessary to strengthen the launching pad yet?"

Wang Dong interrupted him with a laugh. Then he said: "The old idea of strengthening the launching pad has been discarded. Since the 'gang of four' was smashed, rapid progress has been made on the scientific and technological front. A new type of launching pad has been produced after intensive scientific research. The launching can be carried out anywhere." Chen Lin sighed as though in deep meditation. He asked: "Does it mean that the launching will take place in that kiln today?"

"Right! Today!" Wang Dong particularly emphasized "today." He took out a map and said, "This map about the maneuver was received a while ago. Look over it!"

Wang Dong handed over the map to Chen Lin and at the same time kept his eyes on the kiln and cried: "Zhang Tiehu, erect the guided missile!"

Chen Lin took over the map, and Wang Dong told him: "Just guess how big is this maneuver." Before Chen Lin could say anything, Wang Dong cheerfully continued: "Working together with us is a whole guided missile group spread out over an area of hundreds of square kilometers. Now, in coordination with the provincial military district and the militia, the fraternal units are carrying out mobile warfare."

Wang Dong's voice showed his excitement and great emotion. His joy was clearly shown on his face. Why was he so cheerful today? Chen Lin's thoughts again went back to the past.



He recalled that several years ago, Wang Dong already turned his attention on the special features of modern warfare and was particularly keen in studying mobile warfare with guided missiles. At that time, the "gang of four" was on the rampage, and some of their trusted men were sent to Wang's unit ostensibly for "inspection" but actually to collect materials to be used against some responsible persons in the Military Affairs Commission. They reproached Wang Dong for neglecting the "political movement" and being obsessed with mobile warfare maneuvers, which was a deviation from the main orientation, or taking the capitalist road of "flying the satellite in the sky and letting the red flag plummet on the ground." Wang Dong refuted their fallacy and carried out a tit-for-tat struggle with them. He further instructed the guards not to admit anyone who had no official business with the army and came to see the launching of guided missiles without proper clearances. That was how he got into big trouble and became the target of repeated attacks, persecutions...

Even in those depressing days, Wang Dong gave no thought to his own personal suffering, but was full of worry for the future of the motherland and the army. Nobody could tell for how many nights had he kept gazing at the sky to watch the passing of satellites. His heart was heavy and he could never feel at ease even during his sleep. Night after night, he studied Chairman Mao's military works under a dim light and thought of a future war. He thought of the respected and beloved Premier Zhou's concern for the guided missile unit, and the blockade during the war in years past...

Today, the "gang of four" has been smashed, and according to Wang Dong's proposal, the science and technology departments have produced launching pads suitable for mobile operation. So how could Wang Dong help but rejoice! However, he rejoiced not because of the materialization of his ideas, but because he profoundly realized that the destinies of the motherland and the people were closely linked together. Now that the motherland, like a ship, had bypassed a hidden shoal and a bright future was straight ahead, how could he help but be overjoyed!

Looking at the flowers in full bloom in the village, he said cheerfully: "Now that Chairman Hua is holding high Chairman Mao's great banner and resolutely implementing Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, there are great hopes for our party, our country and our army!..."

In Chen Lin's mind, one past episode emerged after another, all being brilliant epics of loyalty to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line! From Wang Dong's image, Chen Lin could see his own shortcomings, his own responsibility and the direction for him to advance.

Everything not needed was cleared out of the way, and on the kiln ground, a tall "iron peak" stood erect. When the "firing" order was received from the Maneuver Command Post, Wang Dong waved a green flag once, and the operator pressed the firing button. Quickly following a "whizz" and

a flash was the roar of the guided missile. The lights at the tail fins became brighter and brighter. The body of the guided missile moved only once and then zoomed out of the launching stand, picking up momentum gradually and getting higher and higher until it finally disappeared in the space, leaving behind only a spark.

Immediately afterwards, massed shots were heard from below the White Tiger Cliff. The "enemy's" parachuting unit was surrounded by the mechanized division of our military district. Our fighter planes were also in action in the sky. A dog fight with "enemy" planes was in progress. The whole sky above the Pinetree Plain was brightened with fires from below and the rumblings of heavy artillery shook the earth.

Soon a congratulatory message was received from the Maneuver Command Post reading: Target "Enemy" No 02 has been destroyed by our guided missile.

"The launching was a success!"

"The launching was a success!"

The kiln ground became the scene of great rejoicing, and every family in the Peach Blossom Village shared their joy.

Chen Lin was so excited that he could hardly keep his mouth shut. In fact, he talked more than usual. He said: "With the whole set of strategic and tactical principles formulated by Chairman Mao and our modern national defense authorities, launching sites are everywhere within the 9.6 million square kilometers of our land!"

Wang Dong patted his shoulder and said: "Right! This is our magic power to defeat our enemy."

At that time, Zhang Tiehu, with a smile of triumph and in the best of spirit, came to report to Wang Dong: "The cable has been collected!"

"Let us move to a new position!" Wang Dong ordered.

The equipment trucks got out of the hiding place and sped out of the village like fierce lions.

Uncle Cheng could no longer attend to preparations for the feast when he heard of the departure of the convoy. With a bottle of wine in one hand and a bowl in the other, he rushed out of his house and ran to the kiln ground. When he got there, he could not find even a trace of the convoy. As soon as he turned around, a loud roar was heard. Another guided missile had been launched from Li Family Village...

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